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CITE SAIGON 3249 SECTION 1 OF 2

TO: IMMEDIATE HEADQUARTERS.

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNIST REGIME IN CAMBODIA WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATE, FAR-REACHING AND TOTALLY NEGATIVE EFFECTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND ON PROSPECTS OF PEACE IN INDO-CHINA.

2. THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM ACCEPTED THE PARIS AGREEMENTS AFTER CONSIDERABLE AMERICAN PRESSURE AND ITS OWN RECOGNITION THAT THE AGREEMENTS WOULD PERMIT THE CONTINUING EXISTENCE OF AN INDEPENDENT NON-COMMUNIST SOUTH VIETNAM WHICH COULD THEN IN A CONDITION OF SEMI-PEACE WORK TOWARD POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSOLIDATION. AN IMPORTANT SELLING POINT OF THE AGREEMENT WAS ARTICLE 20 WHICH STATED THAT SIGNATORY PARTIES WOULD REFRAIN FROM USING THE TERRITORY OF CAMBODIA AND LAOS TO ENCROACH ON THE SOVEREIGNTY AND SECURITY OF ONE ANOTHER AND THAT FOREIGN COUNTRIES SHALL PUT AN END TO ALL MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN CAMBODIA AND LAOS

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AND TOTALLY WITHDRAW FROM THESE TWO COUNTRIES TROOPS,  
MILITARY ADVISERS, ARMAMENTS, MUNITION AND WAR MATERIEL.

3. THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE HONORED  
WAS THE BASIS FOR THE ACCEPTANCE BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE  
OF THE AMERICAN ARGUMENT THAT THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF NORTH  
VIETNAMESE FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD BE A MANAGABLE  
AFFAIR. (THIS POINT WAS CAREFULLY EXPLAINED IN DR. KISSINGER'S  
PRESS CONFERENCE ON 24 JANUARY IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON STATUS  
OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN THE SOUTH.) IF, HOWEVER,  
THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CONTINUE TO USE THE TERRITORY OF  
CAMBODIA, NOT AS THEY HAVE DONE IN THE PAST UNDER COMBAT  
CONDITIONS AND SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT FROM THE AIR, BUT IN  
FREEDOM AND WITH THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF A FRIENDLY COMMUNIST  
REGIME, THEN SOUTH VIETNAM IS OBVIOUSLY CONFRONTED WITH A  
TOTALLY DIFFERENT SITUATION ALONG ITS LONG CAMBODIAN BORDER.

4. ARTICLE 20 IS AN ESSENTIAL PILLAR OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS.  
KNOCK IT OUT, AND THE AGREEMENTS CANNOT STAND BECAUSE THE  
STRATEGIC SITUATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM WILL HAVE BEEN ALTERED  
TO ITS VERY GREAT DISADVANTAGE. GIVEN THE GEOGRAPHIC  
FACTORS WHICH BEAR SO HEAVILY ON THE MILITARY ASPECTS IN

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SOUTH VIETNAM, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT ARTICLE 20, ALONG WITH THE PROVISIONS ON THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE, GOES TO THE VERY HEART OF THE CONTEMPLATED ARRANGEMENT OF PEACE. WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES UNHINDERED IN CAMBODIA AND FREELY CROSSING THE DMZ, THEN THE ENTIRE CONCEPT OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE SELF-DETERMINATION BECOMES QUESTIONABLE BECAUSE IT WOULD BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL THE NORTH VIETNAMESE BUILD-UP INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE BORDERS OF SOUTH VIETNAM REACHES THE LEVEL WHERE THE HANOI LEADERSHIP WILL CONSIDER ANOTHER MILITARY MOVE A JUSTIFIABLE RISK, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMUNISTS' ASSESSMENT OF ACTUAL OR ANTICIPATED POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

5. IN OUR VIEW THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE OVERALL PROBLEM OF INDOCHINA. IT HAS BEEN PERHAPS THE GREATEST ERROR IN AMERICAN POLICIES THAT WE HAVE TRIED TO HANDLE THE SITUATIONS SEPARATELY IN THE THREE INDOCHINESE STATES SUBJECT TO NORTH VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION, WHEREAS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, AT LEAST, REGARDED THEIR TASK AND A SINGLE ONE AIMED FIRST AT THE CONQUEST OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

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6. THE PRINCIPAL IMMEDIATE MILITARY CONSEQUENCE OF A COMMUNIST TAKE OVER IN CAMBODIA WOULD BE THE AVAILABILITY OF A DEEP WATER PORT, TO SUPPORT NORTH VIETNAMESE LOGISTICS BUILD UP IN THE COSVN AREA. THE LOSS OF SIHANOUKVILLE (NOW KOMPONG SOM) IN 1970 HAS COMPLICATED THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TASKS AND THE ULTIMATE FAILURE OF THEIR 1972 OFFENSIVE IN THE COSVN AREA WAS PARTLY DUE TO THEIR INABILITY TO MAINTAIN A SW SN SP FSH ZULUOTICS FLOW. AS A RESULT, THEIR MILITARY HIGHPOINTS WERE USUALLY OF TOO SHDRT DURATION TO ACHIEVE A BREAKTHROUGH, A PROBLEM DULY RECOGNIZED IN COSVN POST-MORTEMs. WITH SIHANOUKVILLE AGAIN AT THEIR DISPOSAL AND UNHINDERED ACCESS TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE BORDER AREAS, THE PRE-COMBAT BUILD UP COULD BE AT HANOI'S WILL.

7. CONTROL OF CAMBODIA WOULD ALSO PERMIT NORTH VIETNAM TO DISPENSE WITH THE HO CHI NINH TRAIL. INSTEAD TROOPS COULD BE SENT BY SHIP TO SIHANOUKVILLE, BOTH FASTER AND IN LARGER QUANTITIES THAN NOW POSSIBLE BY THE BINH TRAM SYSTEM, THUS RAPID BUILD UP OF COMBAT EFFECTIVE FORCES WOULD BE POSSIBLE ALONG THE VIETNAMESE BORDER AND IN A MANNER RELATIVELY IMMUNE TO DETECTION BY OUR INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS.

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8. IN DUE COURSE LOGISTICS AND REAR SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES COULD BE ASSUMED BY THE KHMER COMMUNISTS, RELEASING ALL NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES NOW IN CAMBODIA TO COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT ROLES AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM. THUS EVEN WITHOUT FURTHER MASSIVE INFILTRATION, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES INSIDE SOUTH VIETNAM COULD BE QUICKLY AND SUBSTANTIALLY STRENGTHENED.

9. THE GVN SEES THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF A COMMUNIST TAKE OVER IN CAMBODIA IN THE SOMBER LIGHTS PRESENTED ABOVE. THIS IS REFLECTED [REDACTED] AND IN TALKS WHICH SENIOR EMBASSY OFFICERS (WHITEHOUSE, POLGAR) HAD WITH PRIME MINISTER KHIEM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER NGAI ON 14 AND 15 MAY.) WHILE THERE WOULD BE NO IMMEDIATE REPEAT IMMEDIATE REPERCUSSIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM SHOULD THE PRESENT CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT FALL, THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE. THE FALL OF THE NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER LOW OPINION THE VIETNAMESE HOLD OF CAMBODIANS, WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS EVIDENCE THAT THE U.S. LACKED THE STRENGTH AND DETERMINATION TO BACK UP ITS FRIENDS. THE MORAL RESTRAINTS ON MAINTAINING

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THE CEASE FIRE AGREEMENT, ADMITTEDLY FAR FROM PERFECT, WOULD DISAPPEAR AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WOULD STEP UP MILITARY AND SECURITY ACTIVITIES. ANY CHANCE OF A POLITICAL MODUS VIVENDI BETWEEN THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES WOULD EVAPORATE. PRESIDENT THIEU WOULD PROBABLY CONCENTRATE ALL HIS ENERGIES IN PERPETUATING HIMSELF IN POWER AT THE HEAD OF A SPARTAN, POLICE STATE GIRDING FOR MILITARY ACTION. THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A TREND ARE OBVIOUS. THERE WILL BE NO FOREIGN INVESTMENT, NO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, NO SOCIAL PROGRESS BUT AN INCREASINGLY HARD ATTITUDE TO ANY FORM OF OPPOSITION AMIDST ECONOMIC STAGNATION AND RISING POPULAR PRESSURES.

10. ALTHOUGH SOME MAY ARGUE THAT CONSOLIDATION OF COMMUNIST CONTROL OVER CAMBODIA WOULD LEAD TO NORTH VIETNAMESE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CHINESE, TO CONFLICTS BETWEEN PRO-SIHANOUK AND PRO-HANDI ELEMENTS AND TO INCREASED ECONOMIC

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BURDENS FOR HANOI BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT SHORT-FALL IN CAMBODIA'S RICE NEEDS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THEIR CAMBODIAN ALLIES ARE SUFFICIENTLY FAMILIAR WITH COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION METHODS TO "MAKE THE SYSTEM WORK". CAMBODIA MAY WELL SINK TO THE ECONOMIC LEVEL OF NORTH VIETNAM, OR BELOW, BUT THAT WOULD NOT PREVENT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FROM INTEGRATING THE COUNTRY INTO THEIR WAR EFFORT AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM.

11. IN CONCLUSION WE BELIEVE THAT A COMMUNIST TAKE OVER IN CAMBODIA WOULD BE TOTALLY DETRIMENTAL TO OUR INTERESTS, BECAUSE IT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE "PEACE WITH HONOR" ACHIEVED FOR SOUTH VIETNAM AND BECAUSE IT WOULD BE THE FIRST PHASE TO ANOTHER MAJOR MILITARY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN HANOI AND SAIGON. THIS IN TURN WOULD CONFRONT THE UNITED STATES WITH POLITICAL AND MILITARY PROBLEMS OF UTMOST GRAVITY.

12. SUBSTANCE OF REF AND OUR REPLY WERE SHOWN TO AMB. WHITEHOUSE WHO CONCURS WITH THE THRUST OF THE ABOVE. 12. IMPDET

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